REMARKS

Claim Status

Claims 1-14 and 76 are pending in the present application.

Claim 1 has been amended to expressly incorporate into the preamble and body of the claim reference to the inherent, implicit use of a computer system in the claimed method. Antecedent basis on the specification can be found at page 13, line 17.

Claims 1 and 76 have been amended to delete clauses added to the claims in the previous response. Claims 1 and 76 have been further amended to provide, in element (d), that only limited access to unlock the locked document. Claim 76 has been further amended to move the claim reference to the "locked document" from element (e) to element (d). Claims 1 and 76 have been further amended to provide that, while the approval group members have access to the technical standard, they do not have access to unlock the document or change the draft technical standard. Antecedent support in the specification can be found at page 11, lines 1-12.

No new matter is believed to be added. No additional claims fee is believed to be due.

Claim Rejections

(1) Claim Rejections - 35 USC 101

Claims 1-14 have been rejected under 35 USC 101 on the basis stated in the Office Action that the claimed process does not fulfill at least one of the criteria that process must either: (1) be tied to another statutory class; or (2) transform underlying subject matter. Claim 1 has been amended to expressly tie the claimed process to a computer system. Consideration of this amendment and withdrawal of the pending rejection is requested.

(2) Claim Rejections – 35 USC 103(a)

Claims 1-14 and 76 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over AAPA (Applicant Admitted Prior Art) in view of Grainger (US 2002/0111824) and

Parks (US 6,038,573). Claims 1 and 76 have been amended as indicated above and the pending rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1 and 76 have been amended to more distinctly point out and particularly claim that after the document with the draft technical standard is locked, it is circulated (and therefore accessible to) the approval group members, the document cannot be unlocked by the approval group members. As discussed in the specification, this prevents separate, uncoordinated changes from being made to the draft technical standard. Reconsideration of the pending rejections in view of the amended claims is requested.

The Office Action relies upon Parks for the contention that it would be obvious to modify AAPA/Grainger by carrying out the step taught by Parks of restricting access of the review document to a certain critical group of selected people. In the present invention, the step of locking the document does not act to prevent groups of people from broadly accessing (and therefore reviewing) the document or draft technical standard, as in Parks. Rather, it prevents modification of the draft technical standard by persons who are given access. This is not taught or suggested in Parks.

The Office Action states that it "would have been obvious to modify the teachings of AAPA by including step (g) as taught by Parks to render the electronic document unchangeable once it has been approved or (the) final document has been reviewed for access." However there is no teaching of suggestion in the art of including a combination of two separate types of locking steps – the first wherein limited authority to unlock the documents is provided and access to unlock the documents excludes the approval group reviewing the documents; and the second wherein the document is rendered unchangeable after the document is approved.

The Office Action further states: "As for the new amended limitation, this is inherently included (or appears to be included) in the method of AAPA in view of Grainger and Parks." It is unclear exactly what limitation is alleged to be inherently included in the art. Respecting the "new amended limitation" from the previous Response, the present Office Action indicated that these limitations were given no patentable weight.

Regardless, it is maintained in the present submission that the newly submitted amendments to the claims are entitled to receive patentable weight. Further, there is no

basis in any of the cited art to conclude that it either explicitly or inherently discloses the present invention as currently claimed – including to (1) allow access by a certain review group to documents that (2) are locked to prevent modification by that review group and (3) subsequently rendering the documents unchangeable by anyone after each member of the review group has provided their approval.

(3) Claim Rejections – 35 USC 103(a)

Claims 1-14 and 76 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over AAPA in view of Grainger (US 2002/0111824) and Parks (US 6,038,573), as applied above, in further view of Jeffery (US 6,957,384).

AAPA, Grainger, and Parks were applied as previously addressed in this or previous Responses. Jeffery was cited for its teaching (according to the Office Action) of automatic attachment of comments or attachments to a draft document. Jeffery does not relate to or overcome the failings of AAPA, Grainger, and Parks. Therefore Applicant maintains that the pending claims are patentable over the present rejection for the same reasons as discussed above.

Conclusion

In light of the above remarks, it is requested that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the pending rejections and objections. Favorable action in the case is respectfully requested.

This response represents an earnest effort to place the application in proper form and to distinguish the invention as now claimed from the applied references. In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of this application, entry of the amendments presented herein, and allowance of Claims 1-14 and 76 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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